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For Immediate Release:

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 6.4%

(HELENA) --- Montana's unemployment rate increased slightly to 6.4% in July, with employment slipping by about 700 jobs. The national rate also increased by 0.1%, but remains significantly higher than Montana's rate at 8.3%.

"Montana has seen a gain of almost 4,200 jobs since January," said Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly. "Employment is much higher than at the start of the year and despite the small job loss this month the trends indicate we will continue to add more jobs this year."

Even with the small job losses this month, employment is much higher than at the start of the year. Total employment estimates (which include payroll, self-employed, and agricultural workers) indicate a job loss of 735 in July, but a gain of almost 4,200 jobs since January. Payroll employment estimates indicate employment growth of about 700 jobs in July, opposite to the estimate given for total employment. 700 jobs represent approximately 0.2% of total employment, and therefore both the total and payroll jobs estimates could be interpreted as no significant change.

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) was unchanged in July. Energy prices declined by 0.3 percent, while the food index, and the all items less food and energy index, both increased by 0.1%.

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At the end of August, the Montana Department of Labor and Industry will release the annual Labor Day Report with additional information on employment and economic information on Montana's economy.

*** Unemployment figures are seasonally-adjusted. Seasonally-adjusted numbers remove the effects of events that follow a more or less regular month-to-month pattern each year. These adjustments make nonseasonal patterns easier to identify. The margin of error for the unemployment rate is plus or minus 0.8 percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level. All questions relating to the calculation of unemployment rates should be directed to the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau at 1-800-541-3904.*

The August 2012 Labor Situation Report will be released on Friday, September 21.

******* INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET *******



Visit our website at www.ourfactsyourfuture.org for additional information and analysis, including answers to questions about the unemployment rate, industry employment levels, and annual employment data for Montana's Indian Reservations. **Check out how artists impact your regional economy in this month's Economy at a Glance article.** County labor force information can be found by using this link:

<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/databrowsing/?PAGEID=4&SUBID=205>